3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

In some ways the Tarim Basin is more than old-fashioned—it is mediæval. I remember reading the late Elroy Flecker's play "Hassan" and being charmed with its poetry, but a little superior about the romantic glamour which it evidently had for London audiences—the Golden Road to Samarkand, and so on.

"Samarkand's nothing," I wrote in a letter home. "Here at Kashgar we are twice as far beyond Samarkand as Samarkand is far from London. After all, the city of Tamerlane is directly connected with Charing Cross by steamship and railway, whereas if you want to come to Kashgar you must undertake a real caravan-journey, and a long one too. Even before the days of railways and steamships the caravan journey from Baghdad to Samarkand was not half as long as that from China Proper to this place by Shensi, Tunhwang and Keriya, which is still used occasionally by camel caravans bringing Chinese tea and silks. Then there is the still longer, though cooler, north road across the Mongolian steppes, along which an old Chinese carrier came the other day. He left railhead with his camels last September and turned up smiling in June, talking of his nine months' journey as if it had been a week-end trip. He told me that he had marched for fifty days once without seeing a human being. . . .

"About Baghdad, too, it is a little difficult to enthuse if you have been there. Constantinople, yes; but not Baghdad. Anyway, in twentieth-century Yarkand we can match the characters in 'Hassan' and the things they did in eighth-century Baghdad. Take the Chief of the Beggars, for example. The Beggars, or *Qalandars*, are a guild recognized by the authorities with their *Shangia* or Chief, just as in old Baghdad, and the Chief of the Beggars is one of the wealthiest men in Yarkand. This is because he and his men are in close alliance with the *Shangia* of the *Pashraps* or Chief of Police (a Turki subordinate official) and *his* men. The two Chiefs co-operate in the organization of burglaries and thefts, sharing the spoil. Practically everything that is stolen in Yarkand comes eventually into the hands of one or other of these two men. Since the Chinese made opium contraband a few years ago, too, they have reaped a rich harvest out of the illicit trade in that drug between Afghanistan and Yarkand.

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[1] The result of the Governor of Sinkiang's prohibition of opium cultivation and importation has been instructive. Until it became contraband, the consumption of opium in southern Sinkiang was comparatively small and prices were low; but once the import from Afghanistan and Semirechia was prohibited, the price went up and it became "the thing" not only to smoke but to smuggle it. There came to be big money in the business, and this, together with the excitements of opium-running among the wild mountains of the Sino-Afghan frontier, attracted the most adventurous spirits in the country. The Urumchi Government and the more efficient of the District Magistrates do their best to stop the smuggling, which is only as profitable as it is because there is absolutely no cultivation of the poppy in Sinkiang, a fact to which the Goverment point with justifiable pride;

175 the revolution reached Sinkiang and the revolutionists occupied Urumchi, it was Yüan who defeated them. The revolutionists, led by a man from Hunan, one of the many who had migrated to Sinkiang, withdrew to northern Sinkiang where they proclaimed the independence of Ili. One of Yüan's officers, Yang Tseng-hsin, recruited a Moslem corps, marched north and succeeded in suppressing the revolt. With the military power in his hands and with the backing of Yüan Ta-hua, Yang assumed the governorship of Sinkiang. The Republican government formally confirmed the office in 1912.

175 1. Governor Yang Tseng-hsin
159 The first phase of Yang's administration was military. Oppres-
635 sion of the local officials and crushing taxes drove the Chinese Mos-
669 lems in Qomul (Hami) to revolt, but Yang soon quashed the insurrection. In Ili, Chinese and Manchurian revolutionists continued their resistance. Yang dulled the edge of their power by negotiations. He recognized their republic as a part of Sinkiang and their officials as legitimate officials. Later, when the Ili revolutionists agreed to accept a loan from Russia without the knowledge of the provincial or central authorities, Yang wired Peking and received orders to seize and execute the leaders. Yang acted promptly in taking over control of that region.

159 Another source of trouble for Yang Tseng-hsin was the activities
175 of a secret society known as Ko-lao Hui, introduced into Sinkiang by
635 the troops of Tso Tsung-t'ang and Liu Chin-t'ang. In later years it
575 gained many adherents among the Chinese Moslems. A member who
668 later rose to prominence was Ma Hung-pin, who under the Communists became a vice chairman of Kansu province. During the disorders following the fall of the dynasty, the headquarters of the secret society moved to Kashgar and its influence spread to Kharashar, Kucha, Aksu, Yarkand and Khotan. It took Yang Tseng-hsin two years to suppress the organization.

159 On the northern borders of Sinkiang, Yang's troops fought a
635 number of skirmishes with the Outer Mongolian forces who invaded
175 Sinkiang in 1912 and seized control of Kobdo. Hostilities finally
648 ended with the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Yang and the government at Urga.

159 Internally, Yang undertook administrative and financial reforms.
635 By severe punishment of corrupt officials he sought to check graft,
175 and by the issuance of a new currency he tried to halt inflation.
185 Under him, a million mou (about 135,000 acres) of new land was
631 opened to cultivation. To win the support of the natives, he gave power at the lower administrative level to the begs - Uighur headmen. Since their tenure of office was thirty years to life, they had an advantage over Chinese-appointed magistrates who were periodically changed. In official proclamations, he permitted the use of the native languages. This policy was effective until the collapse of the Imperial Russian government.

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"The traditions, the rituals, the basic and essential relationships which govern men's intercourse, control the small circle living in such far-away places as rigidly as they control the family which dwells in one of China's great cities. Both act according to principles laid down by ancestors, whose control is so subtle and so little questioned as to leave no room for the spontaneous and the unusual." (Cable and French, The Gobi Desert, 165-166.)

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Chinese settlers in Sinkiang of course reflect the religious characteristics of their origin. Among the old settlers, who came into the country with Tso Tsung-t'ang, the secret society tradition is still strong. Merchants, mostly from Tientsin, almost universally belong to the Tsai-li sect which forbids its adherents indulgence in drinking and smoking.

IV. Religion under the Communists

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A. Islam

When they were fighting for the supremacy of China in the years following World War II and when they first came to power in 1949, the Chinese Communists promised religious freedom to the national minorities in an effort to gain their support. Article 53 of the Common Program of the CPPCC, promulgated in September, 1949, stated that "the national minorities shall have freedom to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs." Mosques were promised exemption from taxes and Article 3 of the Agrarian Reform Law, published in June 1950, which decreed the confiscation of the land belonging to ancestral shrines, Buddhist temples and Christian churches and schools, provided for the retention of land by the mosques, subject to the wishes of local Moslem residents. As a further effort to win over the Moslem population of the Northwest, the Government Administration Council issued in December, 1950, a directive permitting the observance of the festivals of Id-el-Fitr, Corban and Molid Nabawi. It abolished tax on the slaughter of cattle for celebration of these festivals and permitted holidays for cadres, soldiers, workers and students of Moslem faith. State trading companies were instructed to sell daily necessities to the Moslems, during these festivals, at reduced prices.

These pronouncements made up the sum total of what the propaganda of the Chinese Communists called the "policy of benevolence" toward the national minorities. They were given tremendous publicity which served to overshadow the grimmer and more gory record of persecution of the Moslem peoples in the Northwest. The reasons for the ostensible policy of toler-

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According to an advertisement in Sinkiang Jih-pao, January 5, 1953, two of the four cinemas in Tihua showed the Chinese feature: "Defend the Fruits of Victory" and the other two showed Soviet Russian films of the heroic type.

Shen Yen-ping, the Minister of Culture, recommended the following films as good features: "The Steel Fighter," "The White-Haired Girl," "The New Young Heroes and Heroines," "The People's Fighters," "The Victory of the Inner Mongolian People," "Chao I-man," "The Red Flag on the Green Hill," "The Concentration Camp in Shang-jao".

He mentioned the following pictures as good documentaries: "The Great Army Marches across the Yangtze," "The Victory Song of the Great Southwest," "The Red Flag Flaps in the West Wind," "The Great Union of the Chinese Nationalities," "Happy Sinkiang," "The March of the Army Liberating Tibet," "Resist America, Aid Korea," "We Must Control the Huai River," "The Victory of the Chinese People," "The Liberated China."

According to Burkhan, the governor of Sinkiang, at the end of 1952 there were more than 40 movie theaters, six rural mobile movie teams in government and army units, sixteen 16 mm. projector movie teams and 91 other movie projecting units in Sinkiang. In 1951, these theaters and teams performed before an audience of more than 4,214,800 (Sinkiang jih-pao, January 1, 1953). In 1952, films and slides were shown to over 5,700,000 people in Sinkiang (NCNA, May 4, 1953). The lantern slides have captions in Uighur, Kazakh, Mongolian and Chinese which were added to them on their arrival in Sinkiang. In 1952, there were only 600 of these sets, but 3,400 sets were being prepared for 1953 (NCNA, May 5, 1953).

In 1954, fourteen Chinese films were dubbed in Mongolian, Tibetan and Uighur (NCNA, December 31, 1954). The first movie showing the life of the Kazakh people, named "Hassan and Karmila" was released. A musical film recording ancient Uighur music was also made for the Uighur inhabitants. In September, 1955, there were 45 movie theaters, 35 educational mobile movie teams, three nationality cultural teams, six theatrical troupes, and 39 cultural halls in Sinkiang.

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The institution of cultural halls is not new to Sinkiang. In the past, each of the nationalities residing in Sinkiang has had its own cultural association. These were usually headed by Moslem priests, village elders, living buddhas, or the princes and begs, and it was these cultural associations, not the provincial Commissioner of Education, which had control over the primary schools in Sinkiang. In 1938, they controlled 1,840 primary schools with a total of 105,087 students, and the Uighur Cultural Association, the largest, controlled 1,540 schools with 89,804 students. There were sub-associations in all the cities and towns of Sinkiang, all under the direction of the headquarters of the joint cultural associations located at Urumchi.

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ciations located at Urumchi. With the advent of the Chinese Communists, the nationalities cultural associations were taken over and in their place, cultural halls and cultural teams managed and operated by Communist cultural cadres were established in the cities and towns of Sinkiang.

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It is strange that in the pronouncements of Communist leaders and the reports of cultural and educational achievements in Sinkiang in the Communist press, no mention can be found on libraries. One can only speculate that with the expansion of publication enterprises under the Communists, the number of libraries must also have increased, as well as the number of books. In the library of the Sinkiang College of Nationalities, the number of books increased 700 per cent of the pre-1949 figure, and the number of books in the languages of the minority peoples increased by 1,400 per cent.

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VII. Organization

The organizational system of public information in the Northwest appears simple but is complicated. Government offices in charge of information services are Bureaus or Committees of Cultural and Educational Affairs on the provincial level, which receive instructions from Peking and control the various information services. Some of these, however, are directly controlled from Peking, and among the newspapers and journals are many which are in the hands of the party rather than of the Government.

175 of the Communist hierarchy and externally by popular resistance.
177 The temporary setback in the program of collectivization in
668 Shensi and Kansu in 1954 had been attributed to the hostility of the peasants and the ineptitude of the cadres. As late as March, 1954, it was revealed that "the cultural standard of the cadres was low; only one in every three cadres could read.... The work of political propaganda and education of the peasants in some areas has not been carried out well and penetratingly enough." (Kansu jih-pao, March 15, 1956). One of the main reasons for the inertia of the cadres and party members, said Chang Chung-liang, secretary of the Kansu Chinese Communist Party committee, was their fear of the new situation created by the transition from New Democracy to socialism, which has been added to their rightist ideology. (NCNA November 2, 1955).

175 Besides the fear of the future, another demoralizing factor
668 was the unwillingness of the cadres and party members to leave
414 their positions in the governments and to work in the cooperatives
578 in the countryside, in defiance of the orders of their superiors. As Wang En-mao, first secretary of the Sinkiang Chinese Communist Party sub-bureau, pointed out: "The largest defect during the past year was the failure on the part of party committees of all levels to resolutely, effectively, and properly transfer the leadership center to rural work in mutual aid and cooperation. Certain defects also exist in our work in the nationalities and religious fields." (Sinkiang jih-pao, March 2, 1955).

175 The defects in nationality work were still charged to "the
668 vestiges of great nation chauvinism and local nationalism," caused
563 by "the practice of usurpation by Han Chinese coming from other
578 parts of China," and their disrespect to the minority cadres, and by the minority cadres who were "conceited, unwilling to study, refusing to observe discipline and doing things not according to policy and principle." (NCNA September 17, 1954.)

The incompetence and demoralization of the cadres and party members, who constitute the main working force of the Communists in the domination of the Northwest, and the discord and friction within their ranks went, pari passu, with the opposition of the people, to undermine the rule of the Chinese Communists. As in the past, popular opposition to the government was often carried on under the trappings of religion. In the Chinese inhabited
[794] areas of Shensi and Kansu, the Taoist secret society known as
[575] I-kuan-tao was still alive and active in the summer of 1955, and the farmers were required to sign pacts pledging to support the government in banning this sect.

175 Out in Sinkiang, pan-Islamism still gripped the mind of the
668 people who are predominantly Moslem. "Individual counter-revo-
669 lutionary elements have infiltrated into Islam," said Burkhan last
578 year, "and, putting on the cloak of religion, are carrying out
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N Yang Shen-chih: Local leader
159 A native of Kansu Province, dates unknown. An influential
631 local leader. From 1949, member of the Military and Administrative Council for the Northwest, member of its Land Reform Commission and vice-chairman of the People's Supervisory Commission; since 1953, member of the Northwest Administrative Council and vice-chairman of the People's Supervisory Commission.

S Yang Tseng-hsin (1860-1928): Former governor of Sinkiang
159 Born in 1860 in Yunnan Province, holder of both the Chu-jen and Chin-shih degrees of the late Ch'ing Dynasty. In 1889, magistrate of Chung-wei district of Kansu, later promoted as the chou commissioner of Hochow, Kansu. He also commanded troops under Chen Sheng-ch'uan. In 1901, he joined the staff of Wei Kuang-t'ao, governor-general of Shensi and Kansu, and was appointed superintendent of the army school in Kansu. In 1908 he was given the position of circuit commissioner of Aksu
S Circuit, Sinkiang. In 1911 he was transferred to the Chenti Cir-
[693] cuit and concurrently held the positions as prosecutor. In 1912
[652] he was promoted to provincial treasurer of Sinkiang. When the
[635] newly appointed governor, Yuan Hung-yu, was murdered on his way to Urumchi (Tihua), Yang was appointed governor of Sinkiang. His title was changed several times, but his actual position remained as the political and military boss of Sinkiang from 1912 to 1928. When Yuan Shih-k'ai enthroned himself as
S the emperor of China in 1916, Yang was awarded an earldom of
[554] the first rank. In 1928, he pledged his support to the Nationalist
[635] Government in Nanking, and was appointed the provincial chairman of Sinkiang. He was assassinated in July, 1928.

S In the history of modern Sinkiang, Yang Tseng-hsin was the
159 only person who ruled Sinkiang for seventeen years. He was
635 credited, during his administration, with restoring peace and prosperity to the province. During those seventeen years, he
S smashed the secret society, Ko-lao-hui (Elder Brother Society),
[575] defeated the invasion of Kobdo and Altai (A-shan) by the troops
[648] of Outer Mongolia in 1928, quelled the disturbances of the Kazakhs who fled into Sinkiang from Soviet rule in 1917, and pacified the defeated White Russian troops who also escaped into Sinkiang during the Soviet Revolution in 1917. Internally, he
S adopted the policy of racial equality among the different tribes
[563] within the border of Sinkiang. Diplomatically, he improved the
[641] trade relations with Russia and settled the border troubles. But,
[648] because of his autocratic and dictatorial attitude toward his subordinates, and his cruelty toward his opponents, he made enemies who brought about his assassination.